

New River Focus Area

The New River Focus Area contains one privately operated aviation facility (Figure 2-12c). The privately-owned Black Canyon City Medical Center Heliport is located in Yavapai County, and is used for private medical use. The New River Focus Area does not have any primary or secondary aviation facilities.

2.7 RAIL FREIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE AND SERVICES

There is one Class 1 railroad, two short line railroads, two industrial railroads, two tourist railroads and eight abandoned railroads in the Northern Arizona study region.

Class 1 Railroads

As the only Class 1 railroad in the Northern Arizona region, the BNSF Railway owns and operates the transcontinental (Transcon) main line and the Phoenix Subdivision line. The double-tracked Transcon line is an FRA Class 5 railroad that parallels I-40 through the communities of Sanders, Holbrook, Winslow, Flagstaff, Williams and Seligman. The track structure consists of 136 lb. continuous welded rail within a 200-foot wide r/w that accommodates a maximum operating speed of 90 MPH for passenger service and 70 MPH for freight service. Trains are controlled by a centralized traffic control system where a remote dispatcher controls switch movements and the clearing of signals.

The Transcon line currently carries approximately 120 trains a day, which equates to an average of one train every 12 minutes. More than 90% of its traffic is classified as Intermodal, which refers to the movement of containers double-stacked on railcars. Generally, eastbound trains transport merchandise from Asia, while empty westbound trains return to coastal ports. The Transcon mainline also carries the Amtrak *Southwest Chief* intercity passenger rail service.

The BNSF also owns and operates the single-tracked Phoenix Subdivision line, which is a FRA Class 3 railroad that connects the Transcon mainline (at Williams Junction) with Phoenix. In 1994, a short section of the mainline near Skull Valley (MP 66.2/80.6) was doubled tracked with signaled switches. The track structure consists mainly of 131 and 136 lb. continuous welded rail, but it does have a few areas that utilize jointed rail and lower weight rail. The line has a typical r/w width of 200-feet and can accommodate a maximum operating speed of 49 MPH for freight service. The line has no wayside track signals (typically referred as "dark territory") where operations are controlled by oral and/or written instructions issued by a remote dispatcher. Approximately 20 trains per day (10 in each direction) utilize the Phoenix Subdivision.

Short Line Railroads

The single-tracked Black Mesa & Lake Powell Railroad is an FRA Class 3 railroad that hauls coal from the Black Mesa Mines near Kayenta to the Navajo Generating Station near Page. The single-purpose, 78-mile railroad is isolated and is not connected with any other railroad system. A 6,000-foot siding was constructed at the railroad's midway point to permit the passing of trains. The track structure utilizes 115 to 119 lb. continuous welded rail and can accommodate a maximum operating speed of 40 MPH. The railroad maintains a fleet of six electric locomotives that are powered by electricity generated by the SRP Navajo Generating

Station. The railroad reports that it moves 8.4 million tons of coal annually, which it accomplishes by running three train trips per day, seven days a week.

The single-tracked Arizona Central Railroad is an FRA Class 1 railroad that carries freight from Clarkdale to the BNSF Phoenix Subdivision mainline near Drake. The 39-mile railroad serves a cement plant and a lumber company adjacent to the line. The track structure consists of 90 lb. jointed rail within a 100 feet wide r/w that accommodates a maximum operating speed of 15 MPH for passenger service and 10 MPH for freight service. The railroad's two freight customers generate between 900 and 1,200 annual carloads, which equates to a train frequency that varies from zero to four 15-carload trains per week.

The Verde Canyon Railroad is a tourist railroad that operates passenger trains on a 20.4-mile stretch of the Arizona Central Railroad r/w between the depot at Clarkdale (MP 38.7) and MP 18.3. The railroad maintains a fleet of two vintage locomotives that typically pull 16 passenger cars on the four-hour round trip. The railroad carries about 90,000 riders annually by operating six tourist trains per week.

Industrial Railroads

The APS Cholla Power Plant railroad in Joseph City, Arizona consists of 7-miles of loop, yard and spur track just north of the BNSF Transcon mainline. The industrial railroad's sole purpose is to facilitate coal trains through the APS Cholla Power Plant. The track structure utilizes 119 to 136 lb. jointed rail and maximum operating speeds are dictated by pertinent yard limits rules. The railroad operates three remote-controlled locomotives for switching and experiences approximately 33,000 carloads per year. The railroad will typically shuttle 30-car cuts of coal into the plant at a time, with empty cars being returned to the BNSF yard.

The Camp Navajo Railroad is owned by the Arizona National Guard and exists to move military loads within the State of Arizona military reservation at Bellemont. The 38-mile rail network connects with the BNSF Transcon mainline just west of Flagstaff. The FRA Class 1 railroad has a track structure that consists mainly of 80, 85 and 90 lb. jointed rail, but it does have a few sections of 131 lb. rail. The railroad has a maximum operating speed of 10 MPH and maintains a fleet of three locomotives. The railroad moves about 40 carloads per year on an "as required" basis.

Tourist Railroads

In addition to the Verde Canyon Railroad, the Grand Canyon Railway operates on 64 route-miles between the BNSF Transcon mainline at Williams and the NPS hotel facilities located at the Grand Canyon's South Rim. The FRA Class 2 railroad is among one of the most popular tourist railroads in the United States with an annual ridership of approximately 240,000. The railroad utilizes 90 and 115 lb. bolted rail and has a maximum operating speed of 40 MPH. The line is not signaled, which means passenger rail operations are governed by oral and/or written instructions issued by a remote dispatcher. Wyes at both ends of the railroad permit passenger trains to reverse direction. The railroad maintains a fleet of nine vintage diesel locomotives and two steam locomotives. The railroad currently operates two round trips daily between Memorial Day and Labor Day, and one daily round trip during the rest of the year.